



HILDA QUICK



NEW ACQUISITION



TEST YOUR ART KNOWLEDGE

ARTEFACT

The Newsletter of the Friends of Penlee House
**A JOURNEY THROUGH WEST CORNWALL AND
THE CORNISH PAINTINGS OF MARTINA THOMAS**
27 JANUARY – 20 APRIL 2024

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Martina Thomas, Sennen Cove, Penlee House Gallery & Museum / © The Artist's Estate.

This Spring we are staging two exhibitions to run concurrently. The first is a one-room show of Cornish landscapes by artist Martina Thomas (1924 - 1995). Born in east London, and living most of her life in Sussex, Martina was inspired by her visits to Cornwall with husband Eric Mellon and their children.

Martina was devoted to her faithful Fauve-inspired technique and representation which she observed throughout her life, culminating in paintings with an application of high oil colour using a palette knife.

In celebration of the centenary of the artist's birth and to mark her dedication to painting

the landscapes, harbours and fishermen of Cornwall, Penlee House has worked with Martina's family to curate a selection of her Cornish artworks. The show will include rarely-exhibited examples of her later work alongside works by Martina held in the collections of Penlee House and Falmouth Art Gallery.

To complement this, our second exhibition, *Journey through West Cornwall*, will depict places such as Marazion, Penzance, Newlyn, Mousehole, Land's End, Sennen, Zennor and St Ives. Featuring urban, rural and coastal landscapes and lesser-known topographical works from the Penlee House collection, we've curated a

selection of watercolours, oils and photographs celebrating the local surroundings.

Penlee House Curator Katie Herbert said "Martina Thomas painted throughout her life and the techniques she used are quite different in many respects to the techniques we normally see in the Newlyn School paintings but her passion for art and the Cornish Landscape shines through her work.

A Journey Through West Cornwall will be an opportunity to show visitors how the local landscape has altered over the past 160 years, or indeed, to what extent things have remained the same and would have been familiar sights all those years ago".

the FRIENDS of
PENLEE HOUSE
Gallery & Museum

ARTEFACT is published three times a year by and on behalf of the Friends of Penlee House. All correspondence should be directed to:

Penlee House Gallery & Museum,
Morrab Road, Penzance TR18 4HE

Tel 01736 363625

email: info@penleehouse.org.uk
www.friendsofpenleehouse.org.uk

HILDA QUICK BY RON CLEGG



Hilda Quick, untitled woodblock

This wood-block print by the artist, musician, author and noted ornithologist, Hilda Quick is one of a number to be donated to Penlee House. Penzance-born Hilda attended school alongside Norman Garstin's daughter Alethea. Hilda's early academic achievements did not point to her later success as an artist. Instead it seems her early passion was for the musical score rather than the artist's palette.

During the First World War, Hilda played in concerts to raise money for the Red Cross and in 1920 joined the Penzance Orchestral Society as a first violinist, often under their Principal Violinist Lilian Garstin. She remained with this orchestra for some twenty-seven years. In 1921 Hilda enrolled with the then London Central School of Arts and Crafts where she specialised in wood engraving. A short time in Paris was followed by further tuition, this time from Norman Garstin.

As well as producing programmes and costume designs for the emerging Minack Theatre she also embarked on what would absorb her for life: ornithology.

In the years leading up to World War II, she continued with contributions to theatre productions, book illustrations, art exhibitions and orchestral work. Increasingly committed to ornithology she travelled throughout Cornwall cataloguing species and recording them in her woodblock prints. 1948 saw the publication of her first book *Marsh and Shore Bird Watching in Cornwall*, which she also illustrated.

Following the death of her parents, Hilda moved from Penzance to St Mary's on the Isles of Scilly. Over the years her regular bird-watching trips had drawn her close to the Isles and its peoples. Her second book, *Birds of the Scilly Isles*, was published in 1964.

Hilda died in 1978 at Pringlis Cottage on St Mary's and is buried in the local churchyard. In 1980 an exhibition of her work curated by Newlyn Art Gallery toured Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Some of Hilda's work is archived at the Morrab Library, Penzance and the Minack Theatre, Porthcurno. An online source is easily accessible through the search facility at University of the Arts London.

ACQUISITIONS

Other recent acquisitions include two watercolour portraits of Thomas Cooper Gotch and Caroline Gotch by William Wainwright, kindly donated by Pep and John Branfield; oil paintings by Louis Grier and Garnet Wolesley (bequests); a watercolour painting by Walter Langley, illustrated letters written by Stanhope Forbes and some copper artefacts made by Francis Cargeeg (all formerly on long-term loan); a photograph album relating to performances at the Pavilion Theatre in the 1950s; three collections of local photographs plus a scale model of an AGA cooker made by Herbert Dyer of Mousehole.



Kurt Jackson, Late afternoon, Littlejohns, big orange digger

In addition to these, the Friends' President, Kurt Jackson, has donated the painting *Late afternoon, Littlejohns, big orange digger* from his 2018 Clay Country series. The painting will be on display upstairs this Spring.

NEW FACE AT PENLEE HOUSE

Verity Anthony



What's my role at Penlee House?

My role at Penlee House is as Visitor Experience and Retail Manager (or the unfortunate acronym VERM). This new role combines responsibility for our retail provision with wider visitor experience responsibilities, including managing lots of building maintenance! Since starting the role I have been developing the shop, looking at potential avenues for new stock and stockists. I am pleased that we are soon to welcome two permanent members of the retail team after a considerable period using temporary staff; with these posts filled, we can really drive the shop forward. In 2024 I will be launching Penlee House's online shop. This will give our less local visitors opportunities to support the Gallery in purchasing products from the shop when they may not be able to visit in person.

What's your background?

I come to Penlee House after 7 years working at Bodmin Keep – Cornwall's Army Museum (formerly Cornwall's Regimental Museum), in visitor experience and collections management roles. Here I learnt and developed skills in retail and visitor services. I made the move to Cornwall for this role, despite no military background, and haven't looked back since. I had previously had roles working with archaeological and social history collections at The Roman Baths, Bath, The Museum of London and Museum of London Archaeology.

What's your favourite object in the collection?

My favourite object is actually a group of objects; the Hayle hoard of 2004 Roman radiate coins, found by metal detectorists and then excavated in Hayle parish in 2016. Roman coin hoards will always hold a special place in my heart, as I worked for a number of years at The Roman Baths, Bath where a considerable amount of my time was spent working with a somewhat larger hoard of around 17500 roman coins. I love thinking about how these hoards come to be buried and what happened to the person who buried it.

FREE CREATIVE WORKSHOPS AT PENLEE HOUSE

People report that creative activities can reduce stress, improve mood and build confidence. They're also an enjoyable way of spending time with others whilst learning new skills.

Penlee House will be running a series of 12 creative workshops for people who are facing difficulties or living with conditions which affect their health and well-being.

No previous arts experience needed. Choose from two options:

Online Group via Zoom

Weekly on Mondays

1.30-3.00pm

Starting on 15 January 2024

In-person Group at Penlee House

Weekly on Wednesdays

1.30-4.00pm

Starting on 17 January 2024

If you are interested for yourself or someone else please contact Zoe on 01736 363625 or zburkett@penleehouse.org.uk

TEST YOUR CONNOISSEURSHIP

Can you guess the artist and title of this painting?

The answer is at the end of the newsletter.



SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Our annual subscription rates will rise from 1 April 2024. The new rates will be: single membership **£25**; joint membership **£42**. Life membership subscriptions will rise to **£480** single and **£840** joint. Visit our website to renew your membership today!

Any new members joining between now and 1 April will pay at the new level, with their membership valid until 31 March 2025. This is our first increase since 2018 and it is in line with the decision to increase admission charges at Penlee House. The increase and your valuable contribution will help us to maintain the level of our support for Penlee.

Thank you to all our subscribers!

CAN YOU HELP US?

Are you interested in becoming a Trustee? If you'd like to find out more, contact the Secretary to arrange an informal discussion. We'd also like to hear if you can help with our social media presence or with other IT skills. Contact Judith Summers, Secretary: judithmarybosavern@gmail.com

And a reminder that Penlee House is always keen to hear from those interested in volunteering as room stewards or for behind the scenes roles. Contact David Trevivian: dtrevivian@penleehouse.org.uk

CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION STATUS

We announced in the last Artefact the proposal that the Friends should become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). We're enclosing with this edition a letter from the Chair, Sue Wilthew, giving full details and we would welcome your questions and comments.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE ARTEFACTS

We are always looking for short articles (200-300 words) relevant to Penlee House's collections. If you would be interested in writing a piece to be considered for inclusion, please email us at digital@penleehouse.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Exhibition Private View
Friday 26 January at 6.30pm
A Journey Through West Cornwall and The Cornish Paintings of Martina Thomas

Lecture
Wednesday 21 February at 7.30pm
Michael Johnson, Principal Craftsman
Newlyn Copper

Event
Wednesday 20 March at 7.00pm
Valuation Evening with Barbara Kirk at the Queen's Hotel, Penzance.
£5 entry for Friends / £10 for guests.
Additional charge £5 for a valuation. If you are bringing an item, please arrive at 6.30pm.

Lecture
Wednesday 17 April at 7.30pm
Casey Meyer-Bourne, Cornwall Heritage Trust
An Evening of Archaeology

Exhibition Private View
Wednesday 1 May at 6.30pm
The Exceptional Harold Harvey

Wednesday 26 June at 7.00pm
AGM at Zennor Lecture Hall, Penwith College. Followed by a lecture:
Lawrence Hendra
No booking required. No admission charge.

Lectures take place at Penlee House (unless otherwise stated). Booking is essential.

Admission: Members **£5** Non-members **£10**

BOOKING FOR FRIENDS EVENTS

From March 2024, booking for Friends' events will be via Eventbrite. Just go to our website, find EVENTS, and click through on the listing for the event concerned. The first event to which this applies is the Valuation Evening with Barbara Kirk, at the Queen's Hotel on 20 March 2024.

We're making this change to reduce the extra work for our colleagues at the Gallery, and you will no longer be able to make bookings by telephone. It may be possible to turn up and pay on the night, provided the event is not full.